

**In the Specification:**

At page 5, lines 12-25, please amend the paragraph as follows:

The credit institution 6 then identifies the card issuing financial institution 10 and transmits the debit transaction information to the card issuing financial institution 10 either directly or through a debit processing service 8. The information is received by the card issuing financial institution 10 by a managing computer system 50 as shown in FIG. 4. The information may be received by the computer system via a receiver system 40 which typically employs high speed dedicated communication lines. After identifying an account corresponding to the debit card 2 being used, the managing computer system 50 runs verifications against the identified account to determine whether the debit transaction should be authorized. The account status is verified 12 as a valid, open account that has not been put on hold. The amount of the purchase is checked against a deferred debit purchase monthly spending limit as shown at block 14. The deferred debit purchase spending limit is the amount in debit purchases the debit card account holder is permitted to make each month and may be, for example, between \$1,000 and \$20,000.

At page 6, lines 18-24, please amend the paragraph as follows:

However, in the present system, the card issuing financial institution's managing computer system 50 is configured so that, during the settlement phase, after the receipt of the posting file (shown at block 22), and after the card issuing financial institution 10 makes payment to the credit institution 6, the managing computer system 50 makes a deferred transaction billing record or history (e.g., by adding a transaction to the deferred history as shown in block 26) without debiting the amount of the transaction against the consumer's account. The spending limit balance available is then updated (as shown by block 28) to reflect the purchase made.

At page 8, line 18 to page 9, line 5, please amend the paragraph as follows:

In summary, the present invention is directed to a deferred billing debit card system and method for managing an account at a financial institution. The system and method are to be used in conjunction with a transaction card 2 which is encoded with computer-readable information identifying the financial institution 10 and the account at the financial institution 10. An account

holder uses the transaction card 2 to make debit purchases and transactions. The system includes a receiver system 40 which may include high speed dedicated phone or communication lines, such as network 52, for receiving electronically transmitted debit transaction information generated by the account holder's use of the transaction card 2 in making a debit transaction. The debit transaction information is stored in a computer-readable memory system 44. A computer processor system 42 recalls the debit transaction information from the memory system 44 and aggregates the debit transaction information in a statement showing, e.g., via display terminal 58, an accrued debit balance 30 for a billing cycle. The computer processor system 42 automatically debits the account for the accrued debit balance 38 but not until after the end of the billing cycle and after the account holder is given an opportunity during a payment period 34 to provide a source of payment to cover all or part of the accrued debit balance.